Project I.D. No. 197

NAME: Yamamoto, Shigeno DATE OF BIRTH: 1889 PLACE OF BIRTH: Okayama
Age: 89 Sex: ~~M~~ F Marital Status: W Education: High school

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1907 Age: 18 M.S. Y.Y. Port of entry: Seattle
Occupation/s: 1. Cook (husband) 2. Farmer 3. Managed a veg. stand
Place of residence: 1. Seattle 2. Yakima 3. Toppenish
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Community organizations/activities: _____

~~EVACUATION~~: Moved with daughter in Spokane
Name of assembly center: _____
Name of relocation center: _____
Dispensation of property: _____ Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: _____

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: _____
Address/es: 1. Spokane 2. Seattle
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Husband died

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 8/15/78 Place: Seattle
Translator: Mabel Hall

T: Please tell me your name first?

Y: My name is Shigeno Yamamoto.

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Okayama.

Q: When were you born?

A: April 22, in 22nd year of Meiji (1889).

Q: What is your maiden name?

A: It is Suzuki.

Q: What was the occupation of your family?

A: My father was an employer of a company, so we did not work.

Q: What kind of a company did he work for?

A: It was a silk spinning company.

Q: Was it in Okayama?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Did you live in a town, then?

A: I lived in Kami Nishigawa Town.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I had one older sister and 3 younger sisters.

Q: What place were you among your sisters?

A:I was the second from the top.

Q: What kind of a person was your father?

A: He was a man of few word but a very gentle person. I remember him well. When he came home from work we had already finished our supper, but my mother was waiting for him. After he came home he used to tell my mother about the things that happened that day in a very cheerful manner. He was a supervisor of female silk spinners. I used to listen to him talk. My mother would sit by him and listened to him silently while serving him supper. He would cheerfully talk about what happened that day at work. I still remember that sight.

As he was from a Samurai family he learned judo. One night he had to work. In those days there were no cars, so he was walking towards his factory when he heard someone shout "Robber!", and he saw a robber running down the street. He waited to catch the robber, and when he came near him he tripped the robber and threw him down on the ground. The robber had a knife and tried to kill him. When he saw the knife he felt the danger, so he defended himself with his hand, and was injured. As he could not go to work he went back home. When the police found out about it they came to our house to talk with him. I was in bed then, but I woke up as many policemen came and were asking my father questions.

Q: Was the robber caught?

A: Yes, he was caught, but my father got hurt a little. The police men came, and father was praised by the prefectural government.

Q: How old were you when that happened?

A: I think I was around 12 or 13 years old. I woke up when the policemen came and it was noisy.

Q: What kind of a woman was your mother?

A: She was a quiet person, too. My father and mother got along well, and there wasn't any trouble between them. My mother used to wait till father came home from work. I still remember them having supper together. My father was a supervisor of female si spinners, and he used to tell mother what happened that day in a cheerful manner. My mother listened to him silently as she served him dinner. That sight still remains in my mind. They were a quiet couple.

Q: Have you ever been scolded by your mother?

A: I don't think I was ever scolded by my mother.

Q: Have you ever been scolded by your father?

A: No, never.

Q: What else do you remember about your childhood?

A: I wanted to go to school, so after graduating from the junior highschool I entered a private girls' highschool. I wanted to enroll in a prefectural highschool, but when I sent my application for the entrance examination I was turned down because I was not 16 years old yet. That is why I enrolled in a private girls' highschool.

Q: Was the grammar school 6 years?

A: It was 8 years then. After graduating from it I wanted to enroll in a prefectural highschool but I wan not old enough to enroll then.

Q: What kind of a highschool was it?

A: It was called Jikka Girls' Highschool.

Q: What did they teach there?

A: It was a girls' highschool so they taught us domestic science as well as regular subjects.

Q: How many years did you attend it?

A: I don't remember whether I graduated or not before I came here, but I think I attended it for about 3 years.

Q: Was it a 4-year school or 5-year school?

A: It was a 4-year school. I was engaged then, and my financé had made arrangements to summon me from America in April. I don't know what year it was, but I quit the school and came here.

Q: What was fun at school?

A: I never had fun at school.

Q: Was the study hard?

A: I did not study hard. The only thing I enjoyed was playing tennis. In those days there was nothing else but tennis for girls to play.

Q: Did you commute from home to the girls' highschool?

A: Yes, I did. I walked to school from Kami Nishikawa Town in Okayama.

Q: Was it a residential district?

A: It was a residential district of ex-samurai class.

Q: What do you remeber about your schooldays?

A: I don't have much recollection except playing tennis with my friends.

Q: Do you remember about your teachers?

A: There was one woman teacher who was very kind. I remember about her. She was a beautiful lady. She must have lived near our house as I used to meet her at a bath house. She paased away. I remember only about her. There was a male teacher named Mr. Mano who later became the principal after I left the school. That is about all I remember. It was a private school. I wanted to enroll in a prefectural school, but I was not accepted as I was too young.

Q; On what circumstances were you engaged to be married? Who arranged the marriage?

A: While my husband-to-be was attending a technical school in Okayama he was staying at a home of a couple. Our family knew them, and through them we were engaged to be married.

Q: Have you met him before?

A: Yes, I have.

Q: What did you think about him?

A: I thought he was a serious fine man. After I married him I did not think he was a fine man, but he was a serious man. He never made merry.

Q: How old were you when you were engaged?

A: I was 16. My husband came to America to study for 3 years. We were engaged to be married after he went back to Japan. Once he came to this country he could not study, so he worked.

Q: What did he study? Did he go to school?

A: I don't think he went to school here. He attended a technical school in Japan. We were engaged with a promise that he would return to Japan in 3 years. I was only 15 then. He wrote to me often, but once he came to America it was hard to go back to Japan as he could not save enough money. He postponed his return to Japan, and finally he summoned me.

Q: How old were you when you were summoned?

A: I was 18.

Q: Then you waited for 3 years, didn't you?

A: I was engaged when I was 15, and I waited for 3 years. He promied to return in 3 years, but he could not. In those days it seemed that cooks made the most money, so with a cookbook he worked as a cook in a family.

Q: Where was he living? In Seattle?

A: Yes, in Seattle.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was?

A: I thought America was a wonderful country with money growing on trees, but when I came here I had to work. After I came to Seattle I did some domestic work. My husband worked as a cook, and I worked as a baby-sitter. I don't remember how long we worked like that, but we thought we shouldn't be living like that ~~but~~ and should do something by ourselves. We went to Yakima and started farming. We never farmed before, but in those days only thing we could do was farming or domestic work.

Q: Were you happy when you were engaged to be married?

A: I did not feel anything as my parents had arranged the marriage. At that time I was 16 and my husband was 21. He came to America with a promise that he would be back in 3 years. but he could not save money in 3 years or 5 years. so he decided to summon me.

Q: What did your parents say when you were coming to America?

A: As I think back, I am surprised they did not complain about me coming to America. I think they trusted my husband. As we were engaged they might have thought they could not help it.

Q: Did your parents know the Yamamoto family?

A: Yes, they did.

Q: How far away did they live?

A: Quite a ways from our house. I think it took nearly half a day to get there. by train. I lived in Okayama City.

Q: What kind of preparation did you do to come to America?

A: I did not make any special preparation although he sent me some money.

Q: About how much money did he send you?

A: I do not remeber. He worked as a cook in a family so he must not have made mush money, but he sant me some. I waited 3 years after we were engaged.

Q: Did you attend the girls' highschool while you were waiting?

A: Yes, I attended a private girls' highschool.

Q: Did you come to America all by yourself?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Where did you sail from?

A: I remember the name of the ship was Shinano Maru. I think we arrived at Seattle.

Q: From Where did you get on board the ship?

A: From Yokohama.

Q: Did you go to Yokohama alone?

A: My parent took me there. I think I had a woman companion. She was a nurse going to America, but I don't know what had become of her.

Q: Did you stay at a hotel in Yokohama?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Did you take a physical examination there?

A: Yes, we took an eye examination.

Q: Was there a test to see if you had hookworms?

A: I think there was, but I don't remember how they checked them. I remember they checked to see if I had trachoma.

Q: Did you pass it right away?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What was the name of the ship?

A: Shinano Maru. It was a very small ship.

Q: Do you remember what year it was? Were you 18 then?

A: I think it was 1909. I was 18 years old.

Q: Do you remember what kind of people were on board the ship?

A: I remember only one passenger. She was a nurse, and we became friends.

Q: Was she about your age?

A: I think she was a year or two older than I was.

Q: Were there many other women on board the ship?

A: I think there were not too many women on board the ship.

Q: Were most passengers men?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: Were you afraid to come here all by yourself?'

A: No, I didn't as my husband was waiting for me. My parents were worried about me going on a voyage alone, so they saw me off to Yokohama. The parting ~~for~~ was hard, but I think my parents were resigned as they have given their daughter away in marriage. There were 5 daughters in our family, and I was the second from the top, so I don't think they missed if one of them went abroad. Yet I remeber my father said, "Take good care of yourself." He was a man of few words.

Q: Did you get seasick?

A: I did not feel well the first couple of days, but I did not throw up like other people.

Q: Was the food good?

A: Everything tasted good.

Q: How did you feel when the ship arrived at Seattle?

A: I was looking forward to meeting my fiancé. I knew him, so I waited to see him. Other women were waiting for their husbands, too. I knew him as we were engaged, but some women were picture brides, and had never met their husbands, so some of them complained saying, "I didn't think my husband was that old. He didn't look like that in the picture." Some of them were tragic. Some people landed happily while others refued to meet their husbands saying that they were not the same men in the pictures. The men had sent good pictures of them, but when their wives saw them, they looked like old farmers, so some women did not meet their husbands. I don't know what had become of them. I did not have such worries.

Q: Did Mr. Yamamoto meet you on the ship?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: Were you happy when you saw him?

A: I knew him before, so I wasn't too excited. I looked for him as I expected him to meet me. Picture brides have never met their husbands before so they compared men with the pictures and said that their husbands were not that old.

Q: Did the women on the ship and men below look at each other?

A: Yes, ~~we~~ they did.

Q: Were the men waiting by the ship or at the Immigration Office?

A: I don't remember which, but we were called in one by one.

Q: Did they let you meet your husband then?

A: Yes, they did. My husband and I knew each other, so I was not worried, but the picture brides never met their husbands, so some of them complained that their husbands did not look like the men in the pictures.

Q: What did you say to your husband when you met him?

A: I don't remember. I don't think I said anything.

Q: What did he say to you?

A: I don't think he said anything. He came to meet me, so I could tell on his face that he was happy even though he didn't say anything. I don't think I was unhappy. I don't remember how I felt. I think those who met their husbands for the first time would remember how they felt.

Q: Where did you go from there?

A: I don't remember where we went from there. My husband was working as a cook although he didn't know how to cook, because cooks made more money than any other jobs.

Q: Where did you stay at first?

A: I don't remember where we stayed.

Q: Did you stay at a hotel?

A: I don't think we did. I think we went to the white family where he was working. I did the baby-sitting there. There was a young couple and an unmarried sister living there. This sister taught me English. She taught me vocabularies from a book and made me write them. I learned English a little in Japan, but the pronunciation was different so she did not understand me at first.

Q: How long did you stay in that family?

A: We stayed there about a year.

Q: Were you paid then?

A: I received $1.50 a week.

Q: How much was your husband paid?

A: He worked in another family, and came to see me every night as he thought I was having a hard time. Later I went to the family he was working in. There was a baby in that family, and I took care of that baby. The baby got so ~~used~~ attached to me that she cried and didn't let me go when I left there. I still remember that.

Q: Which family was it? Was it the first family?

A: Yes, it was. The white couple had a baby, and I took care of her. She became so attached to me that when I left whe cried and did not let me go. I think the child was happy that I took care of her. The mistress said to me, "Are you going to leave her when she wants you to stay so badly?" I had to leave, but I felt as if I left my heart ~~was left~~ behind. The child was more attached to me than her mother. That was long time ago. That child must have grown up by now.

Q: Did you move into the family where you husband was working?

A: Yes, I did. We stayed in Seattle for about a year. We thought we shouldn't live like that, so we decided to go to the country and farm. In those days there was nothing else to do but to farm. We went to Yakima. It was a hot place. When we picked hops there the sun was so strong that we were sunburnt and the skin of our faces pealed off.

Q: Did you buy land in Yakima or sharecropped?

A: At first we worked as a farm laborers.

Q: Did you carry blankets over your shoulders?

A: No, we didn't. I think there was a small house. It was a hot place, but we endured the heat and picked hops. While others picked 2 boxes of hops, my husband and I together could pick only 2 boxes as we were not used to that kind of work. It was a big box and if we took time the hops sharank to half. While ordinary laborer picked 4 boxes, my husband and I picked 4 boxes.

Q: About how much was a box of hops?

A: It was $1 a box. It was a big box. If we pick them fast they would fill up the box fast, but if we take time the hops would wither and shrink by the heat and would take a long time to fill up the box. While others picked 4 boxes each, both of us together picked about 4 boxes.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: We farmed at Yakima. My husband's friend was farming at Yakima, so we went there, and with his help we grew onion and potatoe for a year. But the crops were not good so we could not sell them. After that we moved to a small town called Toppenish, and started farming there.

Q: What did you grow there?

A: We grew vegetables, and my husband went out to sell them on a buggy. My husband could not see well because of diabetes. We washed the vegetables, loaded them on a buggy, and had a hired white boy drive the buggy to stores. There were 6 or 7 stores in town, so he sold the vegetables to those store. We did not make any money but we just managed to make a living. People who were good at farming made a lot of money, but as my husband had bad eyes we had to hire a helper. My husband went with the hired help who drove the buggy to town,and my husband delivered the vegetables the stores ordered.

Q: Was the boy a Japanese?

A: He was a white boy. There was no Japanese around except the farmers.

Q: About how many years did you do that?

A: I don't remember, but I think we did it for 2 or 3 years.

Q: You worked hard then, didn't you?

A: Yes, I had to work hard as my husband could not see well. He was a studious man, and he crossed two kinds of strawberries and made a hybrid which he sold as Yama berries for Yamamoto. He also made Yama watermelon and sold them in Yakima.

Q: What kind of strawberries was the Yama berries made of?

A: I don't remember, but he liked doing such thing. He crossed raspberry and other berry and made delicous berries. Klondyke watermelon used to be just green, but my husband crossed it with another kind of watermelon and made the Klondyke watermelon with stripes. They sold as Yama Klondyke in Yakima, but nobody knows about it now. We gave the seeds to the seed stores, so the striped Klondykes are all over now.

Q: Did you stay there for 4 to 5 years?

A: Yes, I think we did.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: I think the war broke out.

Q: What about the Depression?

A: Yes, there was the Depression. I don't remember about that time.

Q: Did you live in Toppernish for many years?

A: Not too long, but I lost my beloved youngest daughter there.

Q: How many children did you have?

A: I had 5 children. Our youngest daughter whom I loved the most died from appendicitis after suffering for 3 days. Since then I have become abnormal.

Q: How many sons did you have?

A: We had 2 sons, and 3 daughters. The oldest was the daughter, who lives in Seattle now. The second one is the daughter who lives in Spokane now. The third one is the son, but he passed away. The youngest daughter died, so there are only 3 left now.

Q: Where were your children born?

A: I think the first one was born in Seattle.

Q: Was she born while you were working in the white family?

A: I worked in the white family for a year. The baby was born after we moved to the country.

Q: Did you have the baby in a hospital?

A: I had the baby at home. My husband delivered the baby. He was studying to be a doctor, but he quit the school and attended a technical school. He came to America after graduating from the technical school. That is why he knows a little about medicine. He delivered all our babies.

Q: Was he good at it?

A: He must have been because the babies were all delivered without any trouble.

Q: Were his eyes bad then?

A: They were still good then. He had the diabetes.

Q: When did he become a diabetic? Was it before the war?

A: I think it was before the war. His eye sight and his legs became bad.

Q: Didn't you have much difficulties during the Depression?

A: Not particularly. I don't remember if it was President Hoover's time or not, but while we were living in Toppenish we were going to be put in a camp. Our daughter was married and was living in Spokane, so ~~I told her~~ she asked me to ~~come~~ go there here and go to camp together.

Q: Were you living at Toppenish then?

A: Yes, we were.

Q: What else do you remember about the time you were growing vegetables at Toppenish?

A: I don't remember as it was so long ago.

Q: Was it a hard life?

A: It was our work, so I never thought it was hard. My husband had bad eyes because of the diabetes, but he went to town everyday to sell vegetables. The town was near our place. We hired a white boy to drive the buggy in town and to sell the vegetables. My husband just went along with him to watch him. We didn't make any profit. We just managed to make a living.

Q: Were you worried when you gave birth to babies?

A: My husband delivered all the babies.

Q: Did you feel helpless without a doctor or a nurse?

A: No, as I trusted my husband. He sterilized scissors and all the other tools and did everything by himself. He delivered all 5 children.

Q: About what time did you get up when you were growing vegetables?

A: My husband got up early in the morning and got me up. We washed vegetables in a stream. As he had bad eyes he had a hired hand drive him to town, and he sold the vegetables.

Q: Around what time did you get up in the morning?

A: I usually got up around 5 o'clock in the morning.

Q: What did you do after you got up?

A: I prepared breakfast. After my husband ate breakfast he had the hired hand load the cart. Then he went to town with the boy and sold the vegetables.

Q: What did you do then?

A: I went to the garden and picked vegetables or watered.

Q: Did your husband come home before noon?

A: Yes, he did. Sometimes he came back to get some more vegetables. Then I picked more vegetables, washed them and loaded the wagon.

Q: About what time did you have supper?

A: Around 6 o'clock.

Q: What did you do after supper? Did you wash clothes? When did you wash clothes?

A: I washed when I had time. I had an old washing machine, so it was better than washing by hand. The clothes didn't come out too clean, but as they were farming clothes we put them on.

Q: What about bath?

A: My husband made a Japanese Goemon bathtub.

Q: Who got the bath ready?

A: I think I did.

Q: Around what time did you go to bed?

A: My husband went to bed as soon as he had supper. I cleaned up and went to bed a little later. My husband got up earlier than I in the morning.

Q: Did your youngest child die there?

A: She died in Toppernish.

Q: What did your second son die of?

A: He was in Seattle, and was married to Mr. Senda's daughter. They were very happy, but my son was weak and he died. His wife is married to a white man now, but she still takes good care of me calling me "Mama". Nobody can do that.

Q: When did your son die?

A: I don't remember what year, but it was 6 or 7 years ago.

Q: Did he have any children?

A: They had 3 children. He died leaving 3 children behind.

Q: He died after the war, didn't he?

A: Yes, he did. All kinds of thing happen in one's lifetime. There were happy times and sad times. There is nothing sadder than losing our own children. I had 5 children, but only 3 older ones are living now.

Q: What other memories do you have about the time you were living in Toppernish?

A: We did nothing but work when we were in Toppernish as my husband was growing vegetables.

Q: Were there any Japanese living in your neighborhood?

A: Yes, there were. There was another family by name of Yamamoto across the road from us. We had 3 children then, and they also had 3 children, and our children used to fight with each other. Our oldest son and their oldest son were the same age. As both our husbands' first name started with "S' the mail always got mixed up. I hear that both Mr. and Mrs. Yamamoto passed away.

Q: What kind of recreation did you have in those days?

A: I enjoyed taking my children to Sunday school. As I liked to sew, I made identical dresses for my youngest daughter and the second youngest daughter to wear to church. I remeber when the youngest daughter came home she said very happily, "Mama, my dress was the prettiest in the Sunday school." I had made the identical dresses for two daughters with pink crepe. I was very happy, too.

Q: When did you start going to church?

A: I was not attending a church then. I started going to church after I belonged to the Methodist Church 4 or 5 years ago.

Q: Did your children attend the church near your home?

A: Yes, they did. It was not a Japanese church. As it was a small town there was no Japanese church. The youngest daughter who died and her older sister enjoyed going to church wearing pretty dresses. I enjoyed watching them.

Q: What did you do on Sundays?

A: We worked on Sundays, too.

Q: Didn't you have any day off?

A: We didn't have any day off. We had to pick or take care of vegetables we were growing.

Q: What about shopping?

A: My husband did all the shopping. As he delivered vegetables to stores everyday, he did the shopping on the way back. There were 5 or 6 stores he delivered vegetables, and they would ask him if he needed anything, trying to make him buy. We had enough food.

Q: Was there a time when you didn't have enough food?

A: Fortunately, ~~I was~~ we were never in need of food. My husband was a serious man. He did not drink or dissipated, but he bought plenty of food. We lived just outside the town, so we were never short of food.

Q: Didn't you make much money?

A: No, we didn't. But we bought a piece of land on the edge of the town, and I had a little stand built on the corner and sold vegetables there. We had a good business there. As it was on the edge of the town people came to our store from the town to buy vegetables, so I was never short of spending money. ~~As~~ The vegetables were fresh and a little cheaper they sold good. My husband took vegetables to stores in town and sold them wholesale. I sold the vegetables on the stand.

Q: What kind of vegetables did you sell?

A: When I had the stand people brought cherry and raspberry to me to sell, so I sold the fruits besides the vegetables from our garden.

Q: What kind of vegetables did you sell?

A: Beans and raddishes.

Q: Did you sell lettuce, also?

A: We sold lettuce, also. My husband went out to sell the vegetables and I sold them on the stand.

Q: How about tomatoes?

A: We grew tomatoes, too.

Q: You grew all kinds of vegetables, didn't you?

A: We had 20 acres, so we grew almost all kinds of vegetables.

Q: Did you buy the land?

A: No, we leased it. The landlord was a kind Indian. He lend us the land and built a stand for us. We grew vegetables in the back. My daughter worked hard and helped us. When she picked beans she was drenched with sweat. We sold what we grew in our garden so we could sell them cheaper than other stores. That is why everybody came to our stand and we had a good business,

Q: About what time did you open the stand?

A: We opened it as soon as we got up.

Q: About 5 o'clock in the morning?

A: Yes, as soon as we got up.

Q: Was the stand a little ways from your house?

A: The house was behind the stand.

Q: Could you see the customer from your house?

A: Yes, we could.

Q: When did you open the stand?

A: I don't remember.

Q: About how many years after you opened the stand did the war break out?

A: Not too long after we opened the stand. I regretted we had to quit the business because we could have made money if we had continued the business.

Q: Did you do it for 2 to 3 years?

A: I don't remember well but I think so.

Q: Were your children all grown up by then?

A: Yes, they were. There were the oldest daughter and her two younger sisters and the oldest son. The second son was ill. He was in a hospital for 7 years with pleurisy. After he got well he married a daughter of Mr. Senda in Seattle.

Q: How old was your youngest daughter when you opened the stand?

A: I think she had already passed away then.

Q: Were your older daughters married by then?

A: No. The oldest daughter was in California. The second child was the son who helped farming and delivered produce to stores.

Q: Was he in highschool or in college?

A: Our children did not go to college as we were poor and they were not too bright. He is in Seattle now. There are hardships as well as happiness in one's life. I don't think I had hardships except for losing my daughter. Our younger son died after he was married.

Q: Did he die before the war?

A: No, after the war. He married Mr. Senda's beautiful daughter. She still is good to me calling me "Mama". She remarried in California, but her husband passed away. She is married for the third time and is living happily now.

Q: What do you remember about the days you had the stand?

A: I had a good time and I was happy. Children brought the produce to the stand and displayed them. People brought cherry and other fruit to sell on the stand, I put them out and tended the stand. It was fun. It seemed as if the money poured in.

Q: Did you make mistakes or had funny experience?

A: I enjoyed everyday, and did not make any mistakes.

Q: Did you weigh the produce yourself?

A: Yes, I did. As I was generous I used to add a handful, so the customers were happy and kept coming back. I was not too good at business. My stand was just outside the town, so I could see the cars coming towards my stand. As the produce was fresh and cheaper than other stores, the customers came to my stand. It was fun, but we had to close because of the war.

Q: Was there a Japanese association or union then?

A: I think there was. A Japanese came and opened a stand on the other side of the road. I felt jealous when I saw some customers going to that stand.

Q: Did the sales go down after the other stand opened?

A: I don't think so. The other stand did not have as many kinds of produce as we did, but the customers went back and forth. As I am human we feel jealous when our customers go to the other store.

Q: Was the other stand on the other side of the same road?

A: No, it was on a new road, but we could see the customers going there. It was shameful that I felt jealous. They did not have much merchandise as they did not have their own garden. We had the garden behind the stand and sold what we produced in our own garden. They did not have much produce but they were our business rivals, and yet they were our friends.

Q: Didn't they apologize you?

A: No, they didn't say anything. They had a son same age as our oldest son. As they did not grow anything, the boy went to get vegetables to sell on their stand. We were growing our own in our backyard, so there was no competition.

Q: Were they the Yamamotos?

A: No, I think their name was Sakai. Their son and our son were of the same age and went to school together and quarrelled with each other. The boy's mother was the same age as I was, and we greeted each other when we met but we were business rivals.

Q: Have you gone back to Japan before the war?

A: No, we haven't. When General McArthur said Japanese could go to Japan, I was one of the first ones to go there.

Q: How was Japan then?

A: It was so long ago that I don't remember. I went to Okayama but didn't go anywhere else.

Q: Was it burnt down?

A: Around where we lived was not burned. There was a castle in Okayama Park which is one of the 3 most scenic places in Japan, but it was ruined. There used to be a few cranes in the park, but there were not there. I hear that they are back there again.

Q: Was everyone in your family well?

A: My father was deceased. I remeber he told me to take good care of myself. He was a gentle father. My mother was still alive then. I wrote to her a few years since then. My cousin used to write letters for my mother, but we do not correspond with each other any more. My mother is gone, too. If she was alive she would be over 100 years old as she was born in 1867.

Q: Were things going quite well when you had the stand?

A: Many customers came, so we made much money. I wished it had continued longer, but the war broke out. Good things do not last long. If it had continued longer we might have become rich.

Q: What were you doing when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Were you surprised when you heard the news?

A: Of course I was surprised. I didn't understand why Japan did such a thing.

Q: Did anyone do any harm to your stand?

A: No, nobody did anything.

Q: Did you manage the store for a while after the war broke out?

A: I don't remember how long we operated it. We made much money there, so it was hard to quit the business but I decided to go to Spokane as our daughter was married and lived in Spokane. She wrote to us and asked us to go to Spokane if Japanese had to move out, and if they had to move, too, let's go together. That is why we decided to go to Spokane, and we went there.

Q: Who else went to Spokane besides you and your husband?

A: Just two of us went there.

Q: Were the children all gone?

A: The oldest daughter was in California. The second daughter was in Spokane, I don't remember where our son was.

Q: Didn't he go to war?

A: No, he didn't.

Q: What did you do with your sick son?

A: He was in a hospital then. He was hospitalized for 7 years.

Q: Did you return the land?

A: Yes, we did. The landlord had told us that he would give us the land if we wanted to, but as we were going to leave, we couldn't keep it. We were good friends for a long time. He had 80 acres of land. He was half Indian and was a very kind man, so we thought we would stay there, but we couldn't so we left. Our daughter asked us to come to Spokane so that we could go to camp together if we had to, That is why we came to Spokane, and we have been living here since then.

Q: Where did you go after you lived with your daughter in Spokane?

A: We have been living there.

Q: Didn't you go to camp?

A: People in Spokane did not have to go to camp, so we settled there.

Q: What did you do in Spokane?

A: We didn't do anything.

Q: Did you live with your daughter?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: What did your husband do?

A: He lived with the daughter, too. I wonder when he died.

Q: Did he die long time ago?

A: I think he died in the country before I came to Spokane. He had diabetes, and his eyes became bad and his legs became weak. He was taking care his health at home. One day he said he was not feeling well. Up to that time a Japanese doctor in Spokane took care of my husband, but as he was going back to Seattle he told us to call a white doctor if we needed a doctor, and gave me his card. That day we called this white doctor, who came to see my husband for the first time. As my husband had clear head he told the doctor what his symptoms were. The doctor then told my husband that he would give him a shot. My husband was happy, and rolled up his sleeve. When the doctor stuck a needle in his arm, he groan and died. I don't know what happened. When the old doctor heard about my husband's death and visited me I told him what happened. Then the old doctor said, "That is why I didn't give him a shot." I think the shot was bad, but the doctor did not tell us that he shouldn't get a shot.

Q: What did the white doctor say?

A: He was surprised, but didn't say anything to me.

Q: Didn't he say anything to your daughter?

A: No, he didn't.

Q: How many years ago did that happen?

A: My grandchild was a baby then. She is over 30 now, so it must be nearly 30 years ago.

Q: Were you in Spokane during the war?

A: Yes, I was. Japanese people in Spokane prepared to evacuate, but they did not have.to. People in Toppenish had to evacuate, so my daughter asked us to come to Spokane, and if we had to evacuate we would evacuate together, but we did not have to go.

Q: How was it in Spokane during the war?

A: Our neighbors were all kind to us, and nothing happened. People must not have known that Japanese were having hard times because of the war. It was very peaceful in Spokane.

Q: What was your daughter's husband doing then?

A: He has been, and still is an insurance agent.

Q: Has he been in that business all the time during the war, too?

A: Yes.

Q: Were the clients Japanese?

A: Not only Japanese but he has many white clients as he is very sociable. He has a good business.

Q: Does he have a business of his own, or does he work for a company?

A: He has a business of his own, and his wife who is my daughter has been working at Cresent Department Store for many years.

Q: Did she work there during the war, too?

A: Yes, she did.

Q: You were lucky, weren't you?

A: We were not persecuted or mistreated because of the war. We lived peacefully. At first we thought the Japanese in Spokane had to evacuate, too, but we didn't have to.

Q:Did many Japanese come to Spokane then?

A: Quite a few people came to Spokane and settled there.

Q: You have been living in Spokane since then?

A: Yes, I have been living with my daughter, and for a while I lived with my grandchild's house.

Q: How did you feel when Japan lost the war?

A: I didn't feel anything. I may have felt differently if we were persecuted, but since everybody was kind to us, and we were not in need of anything we did not think there was a war going on.

Q: Didn't you feel anything when Japan lost the war?

A: I did not feel like Japan lost the war as General McArthur was good. As soon as General McArthur let Japanese go to Japan I visited Japan.

Q: How long did you stay there?

A: About a month and a half.

Q: Could you come back right away?

A: Yes, I could.

Q: Did you go with your husband?

A: My husband had already passed away by then.

Q: Did your husband die during the war?

A: Yes, but I don't remember what year it was. My husband died by one shot. The old doctor came to visit me when he heard that my husband had passed away. When I explained to him what had happened he said, "That is why I did not give him a shot."

Q: Do you remember what year you went back to Japan?

A: I don't remember well but it was in 1940s.

Q: Was it after the war?

A: When the war was over and General McArthur said Japanese could go to Japan, I was one of the first ones to go there.

Q: Did you sail from Seattle?

A: Yes, I did. All kinds of things happened in my life, but I was happy. I never thought it was hard. Only bad thing was my husband was weak and had bad eyes.

Q: Was your husband's eyes bad when you had the stand?

A: Yes. We were growing vegetables behind the stand, and he took the produce to town.

Q: Was he still doing that then?

A: Yes, he did. There were 5 or 6 stores in town. We hired a white boy to drive him to town and sell the produce. My husband went with this boy to watch him.

Q: Did your husband work until you moved to Spokane?

A: Yes, he did. My husband was a stubborn man, so he did not like to admit that his eyes were bad. He produced strawberry and watermelon with his name.

Q: Did your daughters find their husbands or did you find the husbands for them?

A: No, I did not do such thing. My older daughter got married in California, and the younger daughter married in Spokane.

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Y: I think it was the best thing that I came here.

Q: Did you hear about it at a church?

A: Yes, Mr. Akiyama was at the church.

Q: Was that a Japanese church?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Where was the church? Was it in Spokane?

A: It was the Methodist church in Spokane.

Q: Was it a Japanese church?

A: Yes, it was. Rev. Uyemura who was the pastor then is in Seattle now.

Q: Is he a Nisei?

A: No. I came here soon after he came here, so I know him well.

Q: Was he a pastor in Spokane?

A: Yes, he was the pastor of our church. I came here soon after he came here. He is very popular now.

Q: When was the hardest time in your life?

A: I don't think I ever experienced hardships. Wherever I was, I took life as my destiny. I don't think I had a hard time.

Q: When did you work the hardest?

A: As I had many children, I worked hardest when they were growing up. I had 5 children, but I lost two of them, so I have 3 left. We never know how our destiny turns out to be. It is good to have many children even if we are poor. When you lose your children you remember them all your life and you feel sad. Our youngest daughter was a very good girl. A week before she died she sang and danced on a stage.

Q: Was it a Japanese dance?

A: Yes, it was. There was a teacher who taught her how to dance.

Q: Was it in Toppenish?

A: Yes, it was. Our older daughter knew how to play piano, so she took lessons from her. I enjoyed watching them. For a while after my youngest daughter died I was out of my mind. I lost two children.

Q: That was the hardest time in your life, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was. I loved my youngest daughter very much.

A: Are you glad you came to America, or do you think it was better if you had stayed in Japan?

A: As my husband was here I think it was good that I came here, but I thought much of Japan, also.

Q: Have you ever become homesick?

A: No, never. I think I am brave.

Q: Have you served as a president of the women's group in your church in Spokane?

A: No, I joined the group under agreement that I don't do anything.

Q: Don't you like to do anything like that?

A: No, I don't. I don't like to go in front of people, and I am not capable for doing such thing. I am thankful to God for letting me live till today in good health. Many a times I wished I had died before my children did, but I think this is the destiny and I could not help it. I had other children to take care of, but losing my children was the hardest thing.

Q: What was the religion of your family?

A: It was Jodo Shinshu.

Q: Did you get in contact with Christianity after you came here?

A: Yes.

Q: Where did you get in contact with Christianity for the first time?

A: It was in Spokane.

Q: Were you baptized?

A: Yes, I was. I was baptised at a church in Yakima with my husband.

Q: Was it in the early period?

A: Yes, it was. It was before we came to Spokane.

Q: Was it before you went to Toppenish?

A: I don't remember.

Q: You went to Yakima not long after you came here, didn't you?

A: It was after we went to Yakima.

Q: Did you have any children then?

A: I think the oldest daughter was 6 years old then. The second one was a year old. We had two children then. I still remember about that time; what children did and what fun we had. I remeber about the olden days better.

Q: How was it when you lived in Yakima? Did you have fun?

A: It was not fun as we had to work hard. The skin on my face pealed.

Q: Did you grow hops when you were in Yakima?

A: We didn't grow hops, we picked them. When we did housework in Seattle we worked indoors, but when we came to Yakima and worked under the sun it was so hot that the skin on my face pealed.

Q: I am surprised you didn't get sick?

A: Thank goodness we were healthy. We never got sick even when we worked in a hot place like Yakima. We had a hard time in Yakima. We did not have plenty to eat, but we had enough. We washed clothes by hands drawing water from the well. It was like olden day Japan. There is no such place now, but it was like that then. I did not think it was hardship then. I thought that was the life. I had children then so I scrubbed clothes on washboard everyday, drawing water from the well. I am living a life of leisure now. I came here on my own.

Q: Were there many single Japanese men around Yakima?

A: Yes, there were. People who picked hops were mostly men, and there were not many married couples.

Q: Wasn't it dangerous for women as there were mostly men?

A: No, there wasn't any such danger.

Q: Were bachelors all good men?

A: I didn't associate with them so I didn't know if they were good or bad, but I never had any bad experience.

Q: Did the single men drank or gambled?

A: They might have, but I have never seen them doing such thing. Those people had a group, and we married people did not go near them as we did not like doing or seeing such thing.

T: You were lucky as your husband was good.

Y: My husband was an honest man.

T: I heard that some husbands in California gambled while their children were hungry.

Y: I think there were such people, but my husband was very honest.

Q: Were there such men in Yakima?

A: My husband had a friend who was married and had one child, too, so we have never seen anything bad. I think there were some people who gambled.

Q: Were there Chinese gambling houses in Yakima?

A: It seems like there were.

Q: Were there brothels?

A: I think there were, but we didn't have anything to do with them, so we never heard about them. My husband was an honorable man. The only friend he had was married and had a child. We associated with him, so we didn't hear anything bad. We were fortunate. I lived this far, and the children are all grown up, so I have no worries. I only live till I can, and will die here. I don't think about going back to Japan as my parents are not alive. I have relations but I have not heard from them for a long time. I heard from them till about 2 or 3 years ago, but as I do not write to them, they quit writing to me. I cannot help it as it is hard for me to keep in touch with them in Japan. I have a cousin who used to write to me often. Once in a while I remeber her and think I should write to her, but I don't even remember her address. Some people may correspomd with relations in Japan but I don't. I may not be too sincere,

T: You were lucky that you didn't have to go to camp, weren't you.

Y: I think so. My older daughter went to camp from California.

Q: Where did she go? Did she go to Tule Lake?

A: She went to Tule Lake. I heard about the camp from her. I think the life there was pretty good. She used to write to us telling us that they have enough food there, and they served fish often. My younger daughter was in Spokane, so she did not have to go to camp, but my older daughter went to camp.

Q: Did your sons go to war?

A: No, they didn't. Neither of them went to war.

Q: What did you say your oldest son is doing now?

A: He is in trading business. It is not a big business but he is doing all right. He does not have any children, so he adopted a girl and a boy, and the son is helping his business now. I don't know how long it is going to continue as his son is not his own, but an adopted son. I just pray that God will guide them.

Q: Did you object to your daughters or grandchildren marrying other race?

A: No, I didn't. Only one grandchild married a white person, and the rest of them are married to Japanese.

Q: What did you think about your grandchild marrying a white person?

A: I think it is better for Japanese to marry a Japanese. Some Americans are better than Japanese, so we never know. My grandchild is married to a white person, but I am not satisfied with their marriage. I do not say anything. Not all the Japanese are good, and some white people are so good that Japanese can trust them. I stayed for a while at a house of my granddaughter who was married to a white man. I did not get along well with him, so I came here. May be I was selfish.

T: May be it was hard for your granddaughter to be in between you and her husband.

Y: Yes, that is why I left there. I asked my son to make arrangement to come here without telling anybody, and I came here. I might have been selfish but I think it was the best way. Even if he was my granddaughter's husband I didn't know what kind of a man he was. After living with him for a while I found out what kind of a man he was, so I left there.

Q: How did you start going to church in Yakima?

A: I had been going to church before then. The young pastor in Yakima was very kind and treated me like a relation, so I went to his church for a while. Later he was transfered to another church, and my daughter was here, so I came here and started going to church here.

Q: Did you go to church because the pastor was kind to you?

A: That was one reason, but I had been going to church as I thought it was my duty.

Q: Did you start going to church for the first time in Yakima?

A: I think so. I don't remember if I went to church before then.

Q: You were baptized with your husband, weren't you?

A: Yes, I was. We were baptized by a young pastor in Yakima.

Q: Were you baptized because the pastor told you to be baptized?

A: The pastor was very kind to us and visited us often, but he did not tell us to be baptized. My husband and I talked about it and decided to get baptized.

Q: Was the religion of your family Jodo Shinshu?

A: It was Buddhism.

Q: Was your husband's family also?

A: Yes. Most of the Japanese who came from Japan were Buddhists.

Q: Did you have any difficulties in converting to Christianity?

A: No, we didn't. Nobody complained about it. We were baptized because it was good for us. That was so long ago that it is hard to recollect.

Q: What does the husband of your daughter in Los Angeles do?

A: He died long time ago. The husband of my second daughter is an insurance agent.

Q: What did the husband of your daughter in Los Angeles do when he was alive?

A: He was a farmer.

Q: In Los Angeles?

A: They came to our place from Los Angeles and farmed together.

Q: When was that?

A: I don't remember when as it was long time ago.

Q: What did your daughter's husband do in Los Angeles?

A: I think he was in business. He died long time ago.

Q: Was it after the war?

A: I think it was before the war.

Q: Din't they have children?

A: Yes, they did. There are 4 or 5 grandchildren. After her husband died my daughter brought up 5 children . She is working as a typist at a police station.

Q: Didn't she remarry?

A: No, she didn't.

Q: About how old was she when her husband died?

A: She was young, but she did not think about remarrying. She has 5 children. Two sons are in Spokane and 2 daughters and a son are in California.

Q: Your daughter in Los Angeles was born soon after you came to America, didn't she?

A: Yes, she was. She wants to move here. She is my oldest daughter, and one here is the second daughter. There is a son in between them. The fourth one was a son, but he died. The fifth one was a daughter, but whe died also. There are only 3 children left now.

Q: Was the daughter in Los Angeles married when she went to Tule Lake?

A: Yes, she was. Her second child was attched to me calling me, "Gramma". When my daughter left here with her she made a fuss not wanting to leave me. She lives here now. All kinds of things happened in my life, but I am very peaceful now. I have no worries. This is a nice place, and the supervisor here is a nice person. I am glad I can live in such a nice place. I wanted to come here, so I want to live here the rest of my life.

Q: Did your husband belong to the Japanese Association or other organizations?

A: Yes, he served as a secretary for a while.

Q: Where was it? Ws it in Yakima?

A: Yes, in Yakima.

Q: In Toppenish, also?

A: I think it was in Toppenish.

Q: Did he serve as a president?

A: Not as a president.

Q: Did he serve as a secretary?

A: Yes. He had a good handwriting.

T: That was because he had education.

Y: He went to an engineering school.

Q: Not many Japanese here had much education, didn't they?

A: There were very few. My husband was a studious man and he was a scholarship student.

Q: What did he come to America to study?

A: He came here to make money.

T: He should have stayed in Japan after graduating from the engineering school.

Y: He thought money grows on trees in America and he could make money without working. That is why he thought he could make enough money and go back to Japan in 3 years. He left there telling me that he would be back in 3 years, but he couldn't.

Q: Was he the oldest son in his family?

A: He was the only son.

T: I am surprised his parents let their only son go abroad.

Y: I was surprised, too. His father was not his real father, but his mother was a strong-willed woman, so they probably decided to let him go. They probably thought he would come back after becoming successful, but he did not become successful.

Q: Did you come here to settle here permnently?

A: No, I came here with the intention of going back to Japan after 3 years, but I settled here permanently.

Q: When did you decide to settle here permanently?

A: I cannot say when, but automatically I felt that I could not leave this country.

Q: Didn't you think about sending your children to Japan?

A: Children didn't say they wanted to go to Japan, and I didn't want to let them go. Many people sent their children to Japan to have them educated there, but I didn't want to do that. It was a worthless life, but as my children were healthy I was happy. My oldest daughter has 5 children, but my oldest son does not have any children, so he adopted a boy and a girl. Adopted children are not too good because they do what they want to do when they grow up. People experience all kinds of hardships. Those who lived without experiencing hardships like us are fortunate. There are all kinds of people. I don't think my life was particularly happy, but I don't think it was unhappy either. I thank God that I led a straight life. Some people became very wealthy, and some stayed single leading hand to mouth lives. We were well off compared to them.

Q: Haven't you ever leave Washington state?

A: No, I haven't. I didn't have such a chance, and we did not go to camp. Others all went to camp. but I didn't have to go as my daughter was living in Spokane. At first Japanese in Spokane were supposed to go to camp, too. My daughter asked me to come to Spokane and go to camp together if they had to, but we didn't have to go. I think we were lucky.